

## Nobel Ruler 531

### Chapter 531: Moon Splash Star River

All of a sudden, all the light between heaven and earth seemed to be absorbed by the Long Yuan Sword.

Before Yang Qin'er could even see that figure clearly, she felt a terrifying ripple of strength crushing her.

She hurriedly summoned her puppet and wanted to use it to block some moves, but at this moment, the legendary three-eyed eagle's third eye suddenly opened.

The ancient copper puppet instantly broke down.

Yang Qin'er widened her eyes. *That puppet was my most important trump card, yet it was so easily destroyed!*

Qiang Wanzhou took the chance to act.

The blade glistened coldly.

Yang Qin'er's back was cold. She slowly lowered her head and saw the sharp blade pierce through her chest.

Indignance, anger, fear...

She panicked, and just as she was about to speak, the force had already smashed against her.

*Poof!*

She vomited blood out, and all her organs and limbs seemed to be crushed. Then, her figure finally disappeared from the spot.

Qiang Wanzhou looked up.

Chu Liuyue was standing in midair, and the Long Yuan Sword was in her hand.

It finally awakened!

The light was dazzling as sparks flew everywhere.

He almost couldn't see the situation within the light, but he could clearly feel Chu Liuyue's aura intensifying rapidly.

The next moment, Chu Liuyue finally raised the Long Yuan Sword high up in the sky.

*Hong long!*

The ground completely broke, and the endless fire started collapsing.

The strength within heaven and earth seemed to have lost control at that moment as it became as messy as ever and rushed toward the Long Yuan Sword.

Amidst the horror, Qiang Wanzhou looked up.

In midair, Chu Liuyue held the sword with both hands.

With the gigantic sword blade as a comparison, her figure looked extra small and petite. However... it didn't overshadow her at all!

The Long Yuan Sword was indeed formidable, but at this moment, it had already become her sword.

The suppression was more ferocious than ever!

Qiang Wanzhou slightly widened his steps, and his entire body tensed up, causing the force to rise in his body rapidly.

But just as the aura was about to overwhelm him, it suddenly stopped in front of him.

Everything in the surroundings was being destroyed, but the force avoided him.

Qiang Wanzhou looked at the figure above, and light flashed across his eyes. The next moment, his body finally disappeared from the ground.

...

“You’re the only one left in the Tianling God Realm now.” The ancestor’s voice entered her ears. “The Long Yuan Sword can finally start recognizing its master.”

Chu Liuyue held the sword handle tightly, looked afar, and slightly nodded. Then, she raised the Long Yuan Sword above her head.

The boundless strength entered and even formed a large energy vortex above her head.

Her bodily force was being exhausted at a crazy rate, but the water droplet rapidly turned, causing its strength to keep flowing toward Chu Liuyue’s limbs and skeletons.

*Bang!*

A light sound suddenly reverberated in her mind.

Chu Liuyue actually broke through and became a stage-four warrior at this moment.

The fourth line gradually appeared on the water droplet.

Chu Liuyue used all her strength, and the sword landed!

An invisible force flowed out of the Long Yuan Sword and silently went to the side.

In the distant night sky, the bright moon hung high when it suddenly dropped.

The endless water sparks suddenly rippled.

Instantly, it looked like the moon was splashing into the river of stars.

The millions of points of bright light shone in a dazzling manner, and they all bloomed at the same time.

Chu Liuyue watched the events unfold without blinking.

The ancestor had previously instructed her, "If a stage-nine warrior can summon the Heavenly Dao and successfully break through, they can create a Minor Chilocosm that belongs to the creator alone. It's a pity that I didn't succeed back then, and everything failed at the last step. Even though the Heavenly Dao stopped here, it completely broke down and dissipated, causing the incomplete Minor Chilocosm to split into two.

"In this heaven and earth, half is water, while the other half is fire. Half of it is extremely cold, whereas the other half is extremely hot. As time trickled past, the environment of this place's two halves became increasingly extreme. In the end, this happened."

“In order to balance the strength within the Minor Chilocosm, I forcefully split the Long Yuan Sword’s sword soul into two and suppressed one each on the two sides. Of course, my last bit of consciousness was also split into two. No matter which side you go, the Long Yuan Sword you have won’t be complete. Only when you completely merge the two worlds will you then obtain the whole Long Yuan Sword.

*Hong! Hong! Hong!*

The invisible sword aura immediately crossed through the center of the border.

This was the place where Chu Liuyue and the rest had arrived at when they first came to the Tianling God Realm.

A gigantic black hole appeared in midair. Then, the golden fire started burning toward that side, and the crystal waters also started spreading to this side.

The two separated grounds finally began to merge.

Chu Liuyue was elated as she couldn’t help but ask, “Ancestor, is this succeeding?!”

A vague figure suddenly appeared beside her. “You... did great.”

Shangguan Jing stood with his hands behind his back, and his gaze was complicated when he saw the scene before him. *Even though I had already expected Chu Liuyue to succeed, I didn’t expect it to be so successful. This girl...*

“Your body has the Heavenly Dao’s strength, so you can control the dissipated Heavenly Dao in this Minor Chilocosm. Once the Long Yuan Sword fully awakens and absorbs all of the Heavenly Dao’s strength, you can officially become its new owner.” As he spoke, Shangguan Jing sighed. “Everything is fated... There’s no better choice than you in this world.”

Everything sounded simple, but it was actually very hard to achieve in reality.

It was already extremely difficult for the cultivator to have the Heavenly Dao’s strength.

Secondly, the person had to have the Tianling royal family bloodline to open that door successfully.

Two strict conditions, yet Chu Liuyue met them both.

Even though he was still doubtful about the black pyramid in her body, Chu Liuyue’s current performance had explained everything.

There was indeed no better person to be the Long Yuan Sword’s new owner than her!

Chu Liuyue was shocked since she didn’t expect that he would suddenly appear. Very quickly, she realized that the ancestor’s figure gradually became fainter.

Her heart sank. “Ancestor, you—”

Shangguan Jing smiled and waved his hands. “It doesn’t affect anything. I told you before that I’m just the last bit of consciousness left in this Long Yuan Sword. Now that the Long Yuan Sword is awakened and that the Minor Chiliocosm is reorganized, I naturally don’t need to continue existing.”

Chu Liuyue’s heart was as if clutched by something. “I-is there no other way? I’ve admired and respected you for a very long time. You—”

Upon seeing her anxious look, Shangguan Jing suddenly felt his heart was soft. “Of course, I really like you. If you were my Tianling Shangguan’s descendant, how great would that be...”

There seemed to be something stuck in Chu Liuyue’s throat.

Shangguan Jing paused and said, “I have a request; I wonder if you can agree. That black pyramid of yours... might have a secret related to my Shangguan family. May I know if you can help me to protect it?”

Chu Liuyue felt her heart ache. “Okay! I’ll definitely do my best!”

### **Chapter 532: Minor Chiliocosm Small World**

*Shua!*

The sword came down from the sky, and the completely silver Long Yuan Sword flew over from far away.

It was the other half of the Long Yuan Sword!

It flew over at high speeds and later merged with the gigantic black sword in Chu Liuyue's hands.

Gradually, a dazzling silver light started to appear in the middle of the dim sword body.

The Long Yuan Sword's aura gradually became stronger.

Chu Liuyue was shocked. *I initially thought that the Long Yuan Sword was powerful enough, but I didn't expect it to be half its strength only. Now that the two Long Yuan Swords have officially merged, its power is stunning.*

A strange connection slowly appeared in her heart—it was the Long Yuan Sword!

As time trickled past, this feeling became increasingly strong.

The Long Yuan Sword in her hands also started to become lighter. This lasted until the two swords finally merged.

Light glowed brightly on the sword body. The next moment, one side of the Long Yuan Sword started burning, while the other side had water flowing through it.

Chu Liuyue let her hands go, and the Long Yuan Sword silently floated in front of her.

A person and a sword stood facing each other in between heaven and earth.

Chu Liuyue cleared her voice. “Long Yuan Sword—Merge!”

The gigantic sword body instantly disappeared, and a normal-sized sword appeared in front of her.

Chu Liuyue held the sword in her hands again with respect.

This sword was totally black, and it felt quite vintage. Also, only the middle of it had a tiny silver dent.

Since the Long Yuan Sword had already recognized her as its master, it was very convenient for her to use it. She didn’t need to exhaust her energy to forcefully wield it around like at the start.

She held the hilt and casually waved it.

A black gap in space silently appeared—it was as sharp as ever.

Chu Liuyue’s eyes instantly lit up. *The Long Yuan Sword is indeed a legendary weapon! The sword’s blade and gleam are the best that I’ve ever seen!*

She looked at her ancestor from the corner of her eyes as she couldn’t help but ask excitedly, “Ancestor, how did you make this Long Yuan Sword back then? It’s really amazing!”

Suddenly, her voice paused, and she slowly turned around.

The ancestor was also looking at her dazedly.

The two of them exchanged glances and collectively fell silent.

After some time, Chu Liuyue then tried to ask, "Um... Ancestor, a-are you still here?"

Shangguan Jing looked at his apparition.

Ever since the Long Yuan Sword started to recognize its new master officially, his figure had indeed become much fainter. Back then, he thought he would immediately disappear from this place.

In actual fact, this should've happened.

The reason why he could live in the Long Yuan Sword was that the Long Yuan Sword was his. But after the Long Yuan Sword chose its new owner, he logically shouldn't continue existing.

However, not only am I fine now, but it even seems like... I look more solid than before.

In the awkward silence, Shangguan Jing coughed and finally spoke slowly. "Mm... It seems like it's different from what I predicted... It seems like things have changed after thousands of years... Hah..."

Chu Liuyue was speechless. She suddenly felt that her previous emotions were wasted, but this thought only flashed across her mind once. She was, of course, elated that her ancestor was still around.

Even though he was only the last bit of his consciousness, it was more than precious to her.

“Ancestor, you’ll still live in the Long Yuan Sword then, right?” asked Chu Liuyue.

Shangguan Jing felt much better when he saw her expectant face. *This girl is really to my liking. That’s great!*

“Hahaha! That’s right!”

After hearing an affirmative answer, Chu Liuyue’s lips curved up at a delicate angle. *I kinda want to thank Shangguan Wan and Jiang Yucheng now. If they didn’t randomly hold this Wan Zheng Competition, how would I have the chance to meet the ancestor and retrieve the Long Yuan Sword?*

She looked around. *The strength of the Heavenly Dao within this Minor Chilocosm Small World had already been taken in by the Long Yuan Sword, and the Long Yuan Sword has now landed in my hands. This place really can’t be considered as a God Realm anymore.*

“Ancestor, are we going?” asked Chu Liuyue.

Shangguan Jing nodded and lightly sighed. “Even though these two heavens and earths have merged, it’s just a land of waste without the Heavenly Dao’s strength.”

Chu Liuyue asked hesitantly, “Won’t you... regret if you leave like this?”

Shangguan Jing shook his head. "It was my mistake at first that led to this place being born. After thousands of years, I've already let go of all my indignation."

He was emotional, but he wasn't upset.

"Now that the Long Yuan Sword has already recognized you as its new master and can reappear in this world again, it can make up for the last bit of regret in my heart."

Chu Liuyue nodded and felt touched at the same time. *Everything here represents the ancestor's glory and desolation. Not everybody can be like him, who bravely put everything down. It's no doubt that he created the entire Tianling Dynasty's existence back then.*

Just as Chu Liuyue was about to leave, she heard some noises from afar.

Something was flying toward her.

Chu Liuyue looked over and was slightly stunned. "What's tha—"

Her voice suddenly stopped as a tinge of shock slowly crept up into her eyes. *It seems like... It is... It looks like... half a skeleton? Also, it looks very familiar!*

Chu Liuyue pointed at the crystal-clear skeleton flying toward her, and her fingers trembled. "Ancestor, t-that's... the remaining half of the great phoenix dragon's skeleton?"

Shangguan Jing blinked. "Oh, I think so. It should've lost its suppression because you took the Long Yuan Sword. Thus, it came over after detecting the other half of the skeleton's aura."

Chu Liuyue's lips quivered. *Should have?! What does 'should have' mean?! The previous half is still in my Heavenly Square Cauldron! This is 100% without a doubt! Also, what does he mean by 'it came over itself?'*

Chu Liuyue tried hard to make her voice sound calm. "...But you didn't tell me before that the other half of the skeleton was on the other side..."

"Oh? I didn't?" asked the ancestor back as he rubbed his brows. "It seems like I'm really getting on in years..."

Chu Liuyue was speechless. *He is still my ancestor after all. What else can I say?!*

Chu Liuyue resigned herself to her fate and threw out the Heavenly Square Cauldron.

Shangguan Jing glanced at her expression and felt bad for some reason as he chuckled. "Um... Since we're leaving, you can take away all the items in the palace."

He was referring to the countless stunning treasures.

Without waiting for Chu Liuyue to say something, he waved his hands.

A gigantic crack appeared in the heavenly pit. Then, the countless treasures squeezed in.

“Girl, quick! That Long Yuan Sword’s hilt is a storage space, and it can bring all of this away!” Shangguan Jing urged her.

Chu Liuyue, “...Back then, you even specifically made a... Cosmic Hilt?”

Shangguan Jing nodded as he urged her.

Chu Liuyue could only obediently place everything within... the Long Yuan Sword’s hilt.

At this point, the remaining half of the skeleton had already reached the Heavenly Square Cauldron.

Shangguan Jing suddenly said, “Oh right! When the great phoenix dragon’s skeleton merges, the great phoenix dragon’s clan will immediately discover it. You know that, right?”

### **Chapter 533: Great Phoenix Dragon**

Chu Liuyue was dazed. “What?!”

Seeing her reaction, Shangguan Jing immediately touched his nose guiltily. “Uh... The great phoenix dragon is an ancient legendary fiend... If they discover this skeleton’s aura, they will chase it back no matter what...”

A bad omen filled Chu Liuyue’s heart. “They won’t think that I did it, right?”

“Of course not! This great phoenix dragon has already died for more than thousands of years, and they can check this! However...” Shangguan Jing paused, and his voice floated through the air. “But it did die to the Long Yuan Sword back then, and you’re this Long Yuan Sword’s owner now...”

Chu Liuyue’s eyelids twitched. *This means that this great phoenix dragon skeleton will most likely bring me a lot of trouble! It’s fine if it’s ordinary trouble, but that’s the great phoenix dragon clan! Once they come, they will definitely push the blame to me! By then, I will be dead!*

Without saying anything, Chu Liuyue immediately turned around and retracted the Heavenly Square Cauldron. *Can I not want the remaining half?!*

But at this point, the half of the skeleton within the Heavenly Square Cauldron also seemed to detect the other half’s aura as it started to float outside.

Chu Liuyue hurriedly controlled the transparent fire.

“Back when I split the Long Yuan Sword into two, I managed to forcefully nail the two halves of the skeleton to the ground respectively. But now that they’re so close to each other... Actually...” *There’s not much use.*

Shangguan Yue tactfully didn’t say the remaining words when he met with Chu Liuyue’s vengeful gaze.

Chu Liuyue took a deep breath in and swiftly put away two halves of the skeleton into the Heavenly Square Cauldron.

The skeleton's two halves merged together, and the transparent fire immediately enveloped it.

This commotion was then appeased.

The legendary three-eyed eagle also flew back in, and a voice sounded within Chu Liuyue's heart. "The Heavenly Square Cauldron isn't an ordinary object. If nothing goes wrong, it can completely cover the great phoenix dragon skeleton's aura. Even if they had detected the aura earlier, they might not be able to find you."

Chu Liuyue then felt reassured. *Since things have already happened, I could only accept it as it is. Besides, perhaps I can better help the legendary three-eyed eagle restructure its body with this skeleton.*

Thinking of this, Chu Liuyue took a deep breath in and stored the Heavenly Square Cauldron again.

She slowly looked at her ancestor. "Ancestor, there's nothing else you've forgotten, right?"

Shangguan Jing had ruled the world, and millions obeyed and were loyal to him. However, he had never expected himself to be this embarrassed and guilty in front of a teenage girl.

He coughed heavily. "Nope! Nope! Right, I helped you place the items over there into the Long Yuan Sword! In the future, all of these things are yours! Y-you can spend them however you like, okay?"

Chu Liuyue looked at her ancestor's meticulous face and finally couldn't help but laugh.

Before this, I never imagined that the ancestor that had only existed in legends and scrolls would try to coax me so stupidly and genuinely.

Originally, she wasn't really angry. Upon seeing the ancestor's current reaction, her heart melted into goo.

Seeing that Chu Liuyue smiled, Shangguan Jing also heaved a sigh of relief.

For some reason, this girl seems to be my natural nemesis. I liked her a lot once I saw her, but I also feel terrible when I see her a little upset.

He was finally assured when he saw her relaxed expression.

Chu Liuyue suddenly thought of something and asked, "Oh right. Ancestor, after I take this Long Yuan Sword away... What happens if your descendants find out about it after I leave?"

*If Shangguan Wan knows about this, she will definitely slaughter me more than a hundred times. Now that my status is unclear, it would be unsuitable if this gets exposed.*

Shangguan Jing thought for a while and also knew Chu Liuyue's considerations as he said, "If you don't want anyone else to know... You can leave a strand of sword aura here. Even though the Heavenly Dao within this Minor Chilocosm Small World has already disappeared, it can still last for many years. An average person wouldn't be able to detect this change."

Chu Liuyue smiled brightly. "Thank you, Ancestor!"

As she spoke, a thought popped up in her mind.

Two strands of sword aura flew out, respectively going in two different directions.

Very quickly, two gigantic Long Yuan Swords appeared between the burly heaven and earth.

At first glance, it really looked the same as before.

Only she and the ancestor knew about the secret behind this Minor Chilocosm Small World. Even if Shangguan Wan and the rest came in, they wouldn't suspect anything when they saw this.

Yet, Shangguan Jing looked at her dazedly.

Chu Liuyue touched her face. "Ancestor, did I do something wrong?"

Shangguan Jing recovered his senses and shook his head. "Nothing much."

*Her previous smile and face... really look quite similar...*

...

Xuan Ji Square.

After Ning Jiaojiao was eliminated, only five names were left on the board.

It was already evening, but there were still many people waiting in the square.

“Ning Jiaojiao had already been ousted today. There won’t be anyone else eliminated, right?”

“Most likely... But this competition is going to end soon. Let’s wait a while longer!”

They had already waited for so many days, so what was this last bit of time?

Suddenly, a figure rushed out of the transportation formation and fell onto the ground in a disheveled manner.

The crowd erupted into an uproar. Originally, many people didn’t have much hope, and they thought that the next person would only be eliminated the next day.

They didn’t expect someone else to come out now.

“Quickly, look! Who is that?”

“It’s another woman!”

“Woman? Is it Chu Liuyue?”

Quite a few people fought to look at the woman on the ground. Her situation was actually even worse than Ning Jiaojiao’s.

She was covered in injuries, and there was a very clear and bloody hole on her back. It was obvious that someone pierced her with a sword.

She looked like she was on her last breath. It was as though she would stop breathing at any moment.

At this point, a name slowly faded from the black marble board.

“It’s Yang Qin’er?!”

“That woman is Yang Qin’er!”

“Everyone else in Purple Xiao Sword Sect has already been eliminated, leaving this one brought in from outside Heaven’s Canopy. I didn’t expect her to last until fifth place.”

“Pfft, I wonder who was so harsh... If that wound was tilted a little more, it would be her heart...”

“It’s a competition after all...” The crowd was discussing heartily.

Elder Duanmu Chun went up to check on her and indeed saw that Yang Qin'er was in a half-conscious state, so he called people to bring her away.

Yang Qin'er could hear the surrounding voices, but she couldn't open her eyes. Her throat was dry and burning as well, so she couldn't say anything either. *Long Yuan Sword... That person...*

"Another person came out!" Someone within the crowd gasped.

Two figures were transported out one after another.

The entire square burst into commotion. *Two people were actually eliminated at once!*

Yuwen Jinghong put down his arms in shock. "Both of them are men!"

This meant that there were only two people left in the Tianling God Realm!

Chu Liuyue... was one of them!

**Chapter 534: The Victorious One is the King!**

They were only a step away from the first one.

He previously still thought Jian Fengchi was crazy for betting on Chu Liuyue placing first. He didn't expect the tables to turn in the blink of an eye.

Amidst the uproar, only the group of people at the gambling table fell silent.

Those few people were eliminated continuously, and they didn't even have enough time to react.

But shortly after, the transportation formation made another sound.

The entire square fell silent as they looked over in unison.

Victory and loss would be revealed immediately.

Under countless stares, a figure emerged from within—it was a young man.

The remaining light shone on his soft golden hair, reflecting faint light.

Compared to the previous few people, his condition was much better. Other than a few spots of blood on his clothes, he wasn't very injured.

The young man stood there and surveyed the surroundings, his cold and white face nonchalant.

His name gradually disappeared from the black marble board, and the gigantic square fell silent.

“... Qiang Wanzhou... That’s Qiang Wanzhou!” Someone broke the stiffening silence first.

Like a meteorite landing into a pot of oil, a big fire burst out.

The entire square burst into an uproar. “Qiang Wanzhou is second! In the Tianling God Realm, there’s only Chu Liuyue left!”

“...She’s first... She’s actually first?! How is this possible!”

“Stage-three warrior... Is she really only a stage-three warrior?”

Facing this sudden result, the crowd had no time to think about why the few of them were continuously eliminated in such a short amount of time at the last minute.

Only one thought was left in their brains: As the person with the lowest cultivation level out of all the competitors, Chu Liuyue actually emerged first in the Wan Zheng Competition!

Yuwen Jinghong was so shocked that his mouth was agape as he stiffly turned to look at Jian Fengchi. “T-that girl... She’s really... first?!”

Jian Fengchi closed his fan and raised his hand to pretend to hit him as he spoke with a face filled with contempt. “Don’t look so useless. I won’t make friends with ignorant people.”

"I-I..." Yuwen Jinghong swallowed his saliva with much difficulty. *I'm the Yuwen family's Young Master, and I have seen all types of situations. Normally, I really wouldn't give such a reaction, b-but...*

"Chu Liuyue came in first! Jian Fengchi, do you know what that means?!" Yuwen Jinghong wanted to grab Jian Fengchi's shoulders agitatedly.

Jian Fengchi moved his feet and easily avoided him. "Hey... Keep a distance away from me!"

*This behavior is too humiliating!* He lightly grunted, arranged his sleeves, slowly smiled, and said, "Of course, I know what this means. Do you think I threw away all that money for nothing?"

Yuwen Jinghong's gaze was dazed. *All I cared about was just how formidable Chu Liuyue was, and I actually forgot about this!*

"F\*ck!" After enduring for a while, he finally spat that word out harshly. *Jian Fengchi is going to be rich overnight! The paying rate for Chu Liuyue coming in first is so high, and he betted so much money...*

Jian Fengchi glanced at him from above. "Why are you so agitated? Didn't you bet with me too?"

Yuwen Jinghong held his head painfully. "I'm regretting that I bet so little, you beast! Why didn't you advise me to bet my bridal money on her?!"

Now, he could only feel the countless white crystals loudly slide past his face as he watched on with his eyes wide open.

Jian Fengchi chuckled and was too lazy to bother with him as he turned around and looked at the stunned crowd.

As they were too taken aback, they hadn't recovered their senses.

*Oh, not really. Those few people with pale faces and trembling bodies should've thought about it.*

*Knock, knock...*

Jian Fengchi knocked on the table. "I'll be waiting for you at Chun Feng Restaurant. Oh, don't forget to bring my money."

He then glanced from the corner of his eye and saw the man who talked about him behind his back.

Upon detecting Jian Fengchi's gaze, that man's legs went soft as he directly collapsed onto the ground.

He almost threw all of his money inside! Now, he had lost everything.

Jian Fengchi said, "Pfft. When money comes, I really can't stop it! It seems that not only will I pay 'more than half of my fortune,' but I'll still earn a whole lot of money! How am I going to spend this sudden fortune... What a headache!"

That person was stumped until his entire face flushed red, but he couldn't say anything at all.

Jian Fengchi turned around, stopped, and said, “Oh right. I have a lot more money than you think I have, so... This isn’t considered ‘half’ of my money. Besides... it definitely won’t be after this.”

That person’s eyes flipped, and he was so angry that he fainted.

Jian Fengchi lightly grunted. *He really can’t take any impact.*

The crowd at the gambling table looked as if they were dumb as their expressions turned ugly.

Jian Fengchi’s words were overbearing, yet he had status and capabilities. Hence, nobody dared to offend him.

Besides... They didn’t even have the energy to mourn the loss of their painstakingly earned money now.

Jian Fengchi turned around and walked toward the inside of the square. He wasn’t worried that these people wouldn’t pay up.

After being in Xi Ling for so many years, nobody dared to mess with him.

Upon seeing this, Yuwen Jinghong hurriedly asked, “What are you going to do?”

Jian Fengchi didn’t even turn around as he walked and said, “That girl helped me win so much money. I have to go and thank her!”

*Originally, I really didn't care about this Wan Zheng Competition. But now... It's a whole new ballgame.*

Chu Liuyue's status in his heart had increased by two levels.

Even though Yuwen Jinghong still felt his heart aching, he was very curious about Chu Liuyue and immediately followed him.

The duo's previous position was a little isolated. After walking a distance, they could quickly see the entire square's situation clearly.

Jian Fengchi looked at the octagonal transportation formation, and he slightly squinted his icy eyes.

Not only him, but every pair of eyes in the square was also looking there.

The bustling noise quietened down.

The crowd kept quiet at the same time, and they were all waiting for Chu Liuyue to come out.

Qiang Wanzhou glanced at the two people lying on the ground not far away.

It seemed like they were quite injured, and they had fainted.

The Black Guards came over and carried both of them down.

Qiang Wanzhou saw their faces and furrowed his brows undetectably. *I have never seen these two people in the Tianling God Realm. They should've gone to the other side... According to what the crowd said earlier, these two people came out not long before me. That's when... Chu Liuyue waved the Long Yuan Sword! This means that Chu Liuyue's movement not only shocked our place but also... the other side?*

At this point, a familiar noise came from the transportation formation.

A petite woman's figure appeared in front of the crowd.

### **Chapter 535: Well-Deserved!**

Her red clothes fluttered with the wind, and her hair was simply tied up. Her face that didn't have makeup had slight smiling intent, and she looked beautiful.

*If that isn't Chu Liuyue, who else could it be?*

The warm light landed on her, and her face and eyes were dazzling.

Quite a few people were dazed at that moment. Nobody had expected that a woman who looked skinny and gentle could win first place in the Wan Zheng Competition.

Once Chu Liuyue came out, she felt all sorts of gazes looking over from the surroundings.

She blinked as she silently surveyed the surroundings before realizing what had happened. *Uh... I think it's because I'm the last to come out. But there's no need for such a big reaction, right?*

Qiang Wanzhou walked over.

Chu Liuyue saw him, and her lips unwittingly curved up. "You didn't—"

"I came late," said Qiang Wanzhou stiffly, but his expression was tense.

Chu Liuyue was dazed before she understood what he meant. *Is he reproaching himself for finding me too late?*

"You're not late." Chu Liuyue shook her head determinedly.

*This Tianling God Realm was so big, yet Qiang Wanzhou could still find me. He must've used a lot of effort. I also know that Qiang Wanzhou had been waiting for me outside the heavenly pit the whole time, even though I spent a lot of time within. Until the very end, he was still fighting for me.*

Chu Liuyue felt that Qiang Wanzhou had done more than enough. She didn't expect that he still thought he was too late.

"Thank you, Little Zhou," said Chu Liuyue softly as she smiled and looked at him.

Qiang Wanzhou suddenly felt his entire body shake as shock flashed across his eyes. He stared at Chu Liuyue as if he wanted to see through her. It was also as if he was seeing someone else through her.

Chu Liuyue was a little surprised. “What’s the matter? Do you not like me calling you that?”

Qiang Wanzhou clenched his fists tightly and spoke after some time. “She called me that too.”

Chu Liuyue immediately guessed who he was talking about—that person was the only one he cared so much about.

“If you really mind it, I won’t call you that in the future.” Chu Liuyue felt that she had gotten closer to Qiang Wanzhou after this incident, so she wanted to call him that. But she didn’t want to scheme anything, especially with someone who might not even be alive...

Qiang Wanzhou didn’t speak for some time before he finally shook his head. “It’s okay; she won’t mind.”

*If she doesn’t mind, then I naturally won’t mind either.*

Chu Liuyue understood his intentions very clearly. “Okay then. I’ll call you Little Zhou in the future. You can directly call me by my name too.”

Qiang Wanzhou nodded hesitantly, but he didn’t speak.

Chu Liuyue did not force him. *After some time, this kid will naturally get past it.*

“Chu Liuyue.” Suddenly, she heard quite a familiar voice from behind her.

Chu Liuyue turned around to look. "Elder Duanmu Chun."

Elder Duanmu Chun looked at her with a complicated expression before finally sticking up his thumb. "Congratulations! You're much more powerful... than we thought. You deserve this first place!"

Chu Liuyue smiled as well. "Thank you for your compliment, Elder. I was just lucky."

But Elder Duanmu Chun shook his head and stroked his beard. "You don't have to be this humble. So many people have lost to you, and it's enough to point out the problem."

At the start, they didn't believe it either. But the truth was in front of them, and they had to believe it.

*This Chu Liuyue... indeed has a lot of potential!*

At the side, Elder Qiuxi suddenly said in a weird manner, "Hmph, who knows what kind of despicable means she used!"

Chu Liuyue's smile didn't change, and she pretended as if she didn't hear it. *Anyway, the results are out, and I'm already the champion. Whatever other people say won't matter at all, so why would it matter to me?*

Elder Duanmu Chun looked at Elder Qiuxi in disapproval. *Even if he dislikes Chu Liuyue, he shouldn't say this in front of so many people. It makes him seem too petty.*

But seeing Chu Liuyue's nonchalant expression, Elder Qiuxi was even angrier in his heart. He couldn't help but say louder, "Chu Liuyue, did you not hear what I said?"

This sentence attracted quite a few people's attention, and the surroundings fell quiet.

Countless pairs of eyes darted between Chu Liuyue and Elder Qiuxi. *Is Elder Qiuxi planning on finding trouble with Chu Liuyue?*

Chu Liuyue slightly smiled and said, "Elder Qiuxi, the competition has already ended. What do you want me to say?"

Elder Qiuxi furrowed his brows. "Of course, I want you to explain how you got first place! You have the lowest cultivation level amongst all of these competitors. If you didn't use some method, how can you win against so many people and take first place?"

Actually, many people wanted to know about this as well.

Chu Liuyue raised her brows. "I don't really understand your words, Elder Qiuxi. I indeed have the lowest cultivation level, but... I'm the weakest here. I believe you knew this very clearly during the preliminaries, right?"

Elder Qiuxi's face changed.

Chu Liuyue had beaten Zhao Yunzhi to the point where she couldn't even retaliate, causing her bodily injuries not to recover even at this point. The abilities that Chu Liuyue had shown during this competition indeed weren't weak at all.

“Besides, I also don’t know why the others were eliminated before me. Do you really want me to ask them one by one about how they are inferior to me? That’s... putting me in a difficult spot,” said Chu Liuyue with a difficult expression.

This way, Elder Qiuxi was the one who had a difficult expression.

“What nonsense are you saying! I told you to explain your own situation. How is it related to other people?!” said Elder Qiuxi angrily and hurriedly. *Chu Liuyue is purposely starting a war. There are quite a few competitors in the surroundings, and the powers they represent.... Chu Liuyue’s words are putting me in a tough spot.*

“Elder Qiuxi, I think you might’ve neglected me. We went to the Tianling God Realm; that’s the place where the Tianling Dynasty’s ancestor was cremated, and it’s very holy. Not to mention me, but even other people wouldn’t dare to do anything dirty there. You’re saying that you think the Tianling God Realm has a problem, or are you doubting the ancestor?” said Chu Liuyue lightly, and her lips were still curved up as if she were saying a simple thing.

But Elder Qiuxi’s heart harshly shook, and the wrinkles on his pale face started to tremble. *I can’t afford to bear this responsibility!*

“Y-you’re slandering me! Since when did I mean it that way?!”

Chu Liuyue looked at him with a smile.

Elder Qiuxi then realized that he was unable to clear his name. After all, he did doubt Chu Liuyue’s words.

He originally wanted to vent his anger, but he didn't expect Chu Liuyue to have such a sharp tongue.

At the side, Elder Duanmu Chun couldn't watch on any longer. "Chu Liuyue, Elder Qiuxi didn't mean it that way. He was just shocked that you got first place. Don't take it to heart."

He then walked forward and boomed, "I hereby announce: the person who got first place in this Wan Zheng Competition is... Chu Liuyue!"

### **Chapter 536: Something Doesn't Seem Right**

The low and mellow voice boomed across the entire square loud and clear.

Chu Liuyue didn't continue harping on Elder Qiuxi's mistake. Instead, she smiled and turned to look at the floating black marble board. Only one name remained on it, and that was hers—Chu Liuyue.

"The competition has ended. Please go back and get some rest before gathering at Xin Li Garden tomorrow morning. Representatives from Xi Ling City's top sects will be waiting there for you. Those who have yet to decide which sect to join may take their time to think it through today. Also, we'll be giving out your respective rewards tomorrow!"

Elder Duanmu Chun's words came as a reminder to many that the participants would be qualified to choose their sects, as stated before the start of the Wan Zheng Competition. Now that the competition was over, it was indeed time for them to do so.

A commotion soon broke out among the crowd as people started speculating which sect each participant would choose. They were certain that the various top sects would fight to get the ones with top rankings to join their respective sects.

Chu Liuyue took a glance at the elders who were closing the transportation formation before looking away. *It appears that they didn't notice the strange happenings that occurred in the Tianling God Realm.*

"Let's get going, Little Zhou," she said while walking down from the stage.

The sight of Qiang Wanzhou obediently following after Chu Liuyue stunned the crowd. They couldn't help wondering what was going on and why the first and second place winners seemed to be on good terms.

Not many people noticed both of them leaving together previously, but with everyone's attention on them now, they were naturally very surprised to see this scene.

"I don't think those two knew each other before the competition. How did they suddenly become so close? Qiang Wanzhou appears to be listening to Chu Liuyue's orders too."

"Haha! Does that mean both of them will choose the same sect?"

"I wonder which sect will be so lucky to gain two new genius members in one go!"

"Hey, did you guys notice that both of them seemed to have broken through while they were in the Tianling God Realm?"

“It looks that way... No, it’s true! Qiang Wanzhou is now a stage-six warrior, while Chu Liuyue is at the fourth stage!”

“Everyone else came out with grave injuries. However, not only did the two of them appear unhurt, but they’ve also broken through to the next stage! The other competitors must be infuriated by this!”

...

Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou paid no attention to the gossip around them even though they could hear their words loud and clear.

Upon sensing a familiar gaze on her, Chu Liuyue raised her head and saw Jian Fengchi smiling smugly while waving his fan at her. *What is he doing here? He seemingly vanished into thin air after sending me to the Mu Residence. Although I can guess what he has been up to, it’s quite surprising to see him here.*

After a moment of contemplation, she decided to approach him. As she paid him a bow, she said, “Greetings, Young Master Jian.”

With a flick of his wrist, Jian Fengchi lifted the fan in his hand and stopped her from doing so. “I should be the one bowing to you since you took first place in the Wan Zheng Competition, Ms. Chu.”

The corners of Yuwen Jinghong’s lips twitched when he heard this from behind. *Ms. Chu? What a polite form of address! Wasn’t he calling her ‘lass’ earlier? He sure knows how to behave in front of the fairer sex!*

Chu Liuyue blinked her eyes in confusion. “What do you mean by this, Young Master Jian?”

A wicked smile crept up Jian Fengchi's face. "There was a wager on the Wan Zheng Competition going on in Xi Ling City, and I placed my bet on you."

*Ah, that explains his good mood and his trip here. He must've received a windfall from betting on me.* Chu Liuyue's eyes formed crescents as she said, "That's so kind of you, Young Master Jian. To think that you even specifically came down to support me. I don't really care much about money. On account that I've received much of your help previously... I'll just take a 10% commission from you. I won't take more than that."

Jian Fengchi's smile stiffened. "W-what?"

Chu Liuyue asked in confusion, "Didn't you come all the way here to tell me this piece of good news and share your winnings with me?"

*At that moment, Jian Fengchi even harbored the thought of biting off his tongue. T-this lass is doing it on purpose! This is outright blackmail!*

"Actually, I..." His words trailed off, and he was unable to finish saying his piece when there were so many people currently watching him. As much as he loved money, he—Dragon Teeth Mountain's Young Master—couldn't afford to lose face.

The numerous gazes on him were akin to little mountains weighing down on him.

Chu Liuyue teased, "A noble young master like you surely won't come empty-handed to express your gratitude, right?"

His heart felt as if it was dripping blood as he spoke through clenched teeth. "Of course not. I wouldn't have won without your help after all... It's only right that I share my winnings with you!"

A bright and genuine grin formed on Chu Liuyue's face. "I'll humbly accept this gift then. Thank you, Young Master Jian."

"You! Are! Welcome!" Each of these words was gritted out with much difficulty. *I should've known better than to come! In my state of euphoria, I forgot how vicious this lass could get!*

Yuwen Jinghong's jaw dropped as he watched this from the sidelines. His initial shock turned to deep respect for Chu Liuyue. Had it not been for the murderous aura emanating from Jian Fengchi, he definitely would've given her a thumbs-up. *How impressive! The number one arrogant and domineering bully in Xi Ling actually had so much money extorted by Chu Liuyue! This is unbelievable! I think I understand a little how she managed to take first place in the competition. She's amazing!*

Chu Liuyue shifted her gaze to Yuwen Jinghong. *He's still as dim-witted as before, huh? That look of adoration sure is familiar... Oh right, he used to look at me that way whenever I taught Jian Fengchi a lesson. I wonder how that wily, old fox Yuwen Wei managed to produce a son like him.*

Yuwen Jinghong nervously introduced himself when he noticed that Chu Liuyue was looking at him. "Hello, Ms. Chu! I'm Yuwen Jinghong!"

Chu Liuyue flashed him a polite smile in return. "Greetings, Young Master Yuwen."

"No, no, no! I can't accept your bow!" He hurriedly stopped her from bowing to him. *How would I dare to accept her bow when Jian Fengchi didn't?*

Chu Liuyue raised her brows slightly, though she didn't insist on it.

Yuwen Jinghong chuckled and revealed his pearl-white teeth as he did so. "I'm rather impressed by you, Ms. Chu!"

He then leaned in closer toward her and whispered, "If I hadn't taken the initiative to ask him about it, he would've kept you a secret! I've known him since we were kids, but this is the first time I've ever seen him having such interest in a woman!"

Chu Liuyue slowly lifted a brow. *Hm? Something doesn't seem to be right here?*

### **Chapter 537: Requesting His Presence**

*I think Yuwen Jinghong has misunderstood something.*

"Young Master Yuwen—" Chu Liuyue was just about to explain things to him when she heard someone calling her from the side.

"Ms. Chu."

She turned her head and realized that it was Duan Ziyu.

He had been waiting here for the past few days of the competition, never leaving the venue a single step. The reason he was late to find her was that he was so shocked by the results that it took him a long time to get over his daze.

“I’m here to take you back.”

“Duan Ziyu? What are you doing here?” Yuwen Jinghong was surprised to see him here. He knew that the latter was Mu Qinghe’s subordinate, and he was no stranger to him, having met many a time. *He’s here to take Chu Liuyue back? Back to where?*

“I’m waiting for Ms. Chu, of course,” Duan Ziyu calmly told him before turning to look at the woman. “Lieutenant Mu is currently in his residence. He’ll be delighted to know that you’ve won the competition.”

Chu Liuyue knew that Mu Qinghe wouldn’t be happy or upset over her win though. Being the introvert he was, he rarely wasted time and energy on people and things that were unrelated to him. Even if he was concerned about it, it was likely because of its deeper implications. Although she hadn’t gotten to the bottom of things, it was clear that the lieutenant knew a bit of the inside story.

Of course, she wouldn’t voice these thoughts out, so she only smiled slightly at the officer. “Good thing I didn’t let him down.”

She then bade farewell to Jian Fengchi and Yuwen Jinghong and turned around. But before she could leave, Yuwen Jinghong shouted, “Wait!”

She looked back. “Is anything the matter, Young Master Yuwen?”

When Yuwen Jinghong saw her calm and nonchalant look, his instincts told him that he must’ve gotten something wrong. Still, he asked, “Y-you’re going back to the Mu Residence with Duan Ziyu? A-aren’t you and Fengchi—Ow!”

He let out a shriek in pain before turning around to shoot his buddy a furious glare. *Why the hell did you beat me when I'm trying to help you here?!*

Jian Fengchi couldn't be bothered to look at that dumb face and started to regret bringing Yuwen Jinghong here a little bit. As he turned around to leave the place, he said, "Nothing. You guys go ahead!"

Yuwen Jinghong hurriedly followed him. "What's wrong with you? Why did Chu Liuyue leave with Duan Ziyu? He's working for Mu Qinghe! Isn't that as good as snatching your woman from you?"

Jian Fengchi gave a lazy reply. "Firstly, she's not my woman. Secondly, she's free to go wherever she wants, and it's none of my concern."

"You and Mu Qinghe have always been at odds with each other. Do you really not care even after getting bullied to such an extent?" asked Yuwen Jinghong out of heartache for his friend.

Jian Fengchi looked pointedly at him.

"W-what?" stammered Yuwen Jinghong.

Jian Fengchi began walking forward as he let out a long sigh. *What was wrong with me? Why did I become friends with an imbecile like him back then?*

Yuwen Jinghong looked hesitantly at the two people who left in separate directions before ultimately choosing to follow his friend. "Hey, what did you mean by that? Make yourself clear!"

...

Both Chu Liuyue and Jian Fengchi didn't take this matter to heart, but unbeknownst to them, a misunderstanding arose when the crowd saw the earlier scene. It caused quite a commotion in Xi Ling because they thought that Jian Fengchi and Mu Qinghe were at odds with each other again and that it was due to Chu Liuyue this time.

...

Presently, Chu Liuyue had no idea about the sort of rumors that would be born afterward. As she followed Duan Ziyu back to the Mu Residence with Qiang Wanzhou, she was secretly contemplating something.

*I can't stay in the Mu Residence any longer. There are advantages to me staying in the Mu Residence. At the very least, it provides me safety since almost nobody in Xi Ling City is bold enough to break into the Mu Residence. But living here will also be very inconvenient for me in the long run.*

*While it's fine to cultivate as usual and refine medicine, a lot of problems might crop up if I continue to stay here, for I have a lot of things I need to do. Thus, I need to look for another place to stay. It's a good thing that I've become a lot richer—thanks to Jian Fengchi—so I have a pretty wide range of choices.*

...

Tianling Imperial Palace.

Qingfeng Palace was the abode of the current Emperor, Shangguan You. Ever since he fell into a coma a year ago, he had been resting here.

Security was extremely tight here, and only Shangguan Wan—who was currently in power—could freely enter and leave this place. Others—the royal family included—had to undergo strict checks before they could gain entry. In other words, they had to get a written decree from Shangguan Wan first.

Night was approaching when a tall figure walked out from Qingfeng Palace. The light from the lamps shone down on his face and revealed a handsome and scholarly face, which belonged to Jiang Yucheng.

His face looked a little cold though, which was perhaps due to the winter night's breeze.

Sun Qi—who was waiting outside—immediately went forward to greet him. “Eldest Young Master.”

When Jiang Yucheng noticed that Sun Qi looked slightly off, he asked, “What’s the matter?”

It took a moment before Sun Qi weakly answered, “The Wan Zheng Competition has ended, Eldest Young Master.”

“So fast?” Jiang Yucheng frowned. *I thought it'd take another two or three days.*

He came to visit the Emperor today and had spent quite some time inside, but he didn't expect to be greeted with such news the moment he came out.

Sun Qi explained, “Yes. The last few people came out almost one after another, so the winner was determined very quickly.”

“Who won the competition?” asked Jiang Yucheng.

When the other person hesitated to give him an answer, his frown became deeper.

Sun Qi bowed as he whispered, “Chu Liuyue.”

Stunned, Jiang Yucheng said almost instinctively, “How is that possible?”

But as soon as the words left his mouth, he knew that the question was meaningless because Sun Qi wouldn't lie to him. *So that means... Chu Liuyue really defeated all the other competitors and took first place?!*

“But her Yuan meridian is...” mumbled Jiang Yucheng to himself, but he soon swallowed the rest of his words as his suspicion grew. *That shouldn't happen! Chu Liuyue might be pretty talented, but she's the worst of the lot with her Dijing Yuan meridian being at the intermediate level only. Everyone but her stood a chance at coming in first, but in the end...*

“Does the Third Princess know about this?”

“She's probably heard about it. The competition ended in the afternoon after all,” answered Sun Qi. *I've been waiting here for Jiang Yucheng for a long time, so it doesn't make sense that the Third Princess would be unaware of the news.*

Jiang Yucheng figured the same. *Given how concerned Shangguan Wan is over this matter, she must've sent someone out to gather the news on her behalf. She probably knows everything that has happened at Xuan Ji Square.*

After straightening his clothes, he proceeded to walk forward with Sun Qi quietly following him.

The two of them quickly left Qingfeng Palace. They didn't go far before they met a palace maid on the way.

Jiang Yucheng's eyes clouded over for a second when he saw the palace maid approach and curtsy at him. "Your Highness, the Third Princess requests your presence."

Even though it was a request, Jiang Yucheng couldn't refuse. Thus, he said, "Lead the way."

"Yes. Please follow me, Your Highness."

### **Chapter 538: Leaving**

When Jiang Yucheng arrived at Huayang Palace, Shangguan Wan was waiting for him. "Yucheng, you're here!"

As soon as she saw him, she happily went up to him, intending to give him a hug.

However, he backed away from her. "Greetings, Your Highness."

Shangguan Wan pouted in displeasure when she failed to hug him. “What are you doing?”

“We aren’t married yet, so we shouldn’t be meeting in private this late at night. We need to follow palace etiquette,” he told her.

“Yucheng, this is Huayang Palace. There are no outsiders here, so you don’t have to pay attention to those things. Besides, who will dare to stop me from doing whatever I want?” His reply made her burst into laughter as she reached out to grab his arm. *What’s there to be afraid of when the entire imperial palace is under my control?*

Jiang Yucheng didn’t push her hand away this time. He merely swept a nonchalant look at the palace maid next to her.

“You may leave, Chan Yi,” ordered Shangguan Wan.

“Yes, Your Highness.” The palace maid then bowed respectfully at her before taking her leave.

With a twist of his hand, Jiang Yucheng held onto Shangguan Wan’s wrist. “Let’s talk inside. Sun Qi, stay guard outside.”

Sun Qi hastily bowed. “Understood.”

Jiang Yucheng led Shangguan Wan inside the room before carefully checking all the doors and windows.

It was a funny sight to Shangguan Wan, who laughingly said, "You're being too cautious, Yucheng! Do you have doubts about the security measures I have in my palace?"

It was only after making sure that there was nothing unusual in their surroundings that he turned around and sat down on a stool. With much patience, he explained, "It's better to err on the side of caution. I'm doing this all for your sake."

Shangguan Wan's mood considerably improved when she heard this. She leaned into his embrace, but the latter wasn't in the mood to enjoy their time together.

"I went to visit His Majesty earlier. There's still no sign of him waking up. Those methods don't seem to be working."

The mention of this topic dampened Shangguan Wan's spirits. She sat down next to him, snorting. "Well, you went too hard on him back then, so all we can do is slowly wait for him to wake up. There are only so few heavenly doctors we can trust after all."

*She was the one who failed to handle this matter right, yet she's pinning the blame on me now? A cold glint flashed across Jiang Yucheng's eyes. Forget it. It's pointless to argue about these trivial details now. Besides, we've got more important things to discuss.*

"Let's not talk about this now. Did you look for me this late in the night because of the Wan Zheng Competition?" He cut to the chase and asked her about it.

Shangguan Wan's eyes lit up at once as excitement and elation filled her face. "Yes! I believe Sun Qi has told you the news. The first-place winner, Chu..."

"Chu Liuyue," he supplemented.

“Yes, that’s right! That’s the name! I heard that she’s a young teen and was brought back by Mu Qinghe, is that right?”

Inexplicable displeasure arose within him, but he didn’t show it on his face. Instead, he nodded at her. “She’s just a stage-three warrior. I’m quite surprised that she took first place, but—”

“What? Do you not know that she’s already reached the fourth stage?” Shangguan Wan interrupted.

Jiang Yucheng was stunned to hear this.

A secretive yet excited smile spread wider and wider on her face as she continued speaking. “She broke through while she was in the Tianling God Realm! Do you know what that means? She has an affinity with that place!”

The man knitted his brows. “But her Dijing Yuan meridian is only at the intermediate level. It can’t be compared to those with superior—”

“How is it incomparable at all?” Shangguan Wan stood up, her excitement and ecstasy plain on her face. “Like you said, she only has an intermediate Dijing Yuan meridian, but her performance is way better than those with superior Dijing Yuan meridians! This means that her Yuan meridian—”

“Wan’er, it’s too early to be discussing this. Don’t you think it’s safer for us to take one step at a time?” Jiang Yucheng didn’t want to hear whatever she had to say next, so he just cut her off. “His Majesty hasn’t regained his consciousness, so we shouldn’t act rashly.”

Shangguan Wan dazedly sized him up a couple of times as suspicion filled her eyes. “What’s wrong with you today, Yucheng? I’m just glad that things are progressing really smoothly. Aren’t you happy for me?”

He gently said to her, “Of course, I am. I’ve been waiting for this day at your side all along. I’m just concerned because this matter affects your future.”

Shangguan Wan furrowed her brows slightly. “But you look as if—”

“It pains me to think of the suffering you have to go through afterward.” He stood up, held her hand, and brought her into his embrace.

“But I can’t wait any longer! I’ve been living in fear for the past year, scared that someone might find out that my Yuan meridian has been destroyed and that I’ve become a cripple! It’ll be game over for me if I can’t recover before the Grand Court Meeting!” she cried despondently. *That suffering is nothing when compared to having to lose everything.*

Jiang Yucheng gently patted her back and reassured her. “Don’t worry; everything will be fine. We just need to take one step at a time, and I promise you that nothing will go wrong. Our efforts will go to waste if we alert our enemies now.”

As Shangguan Wan gradually calmed down, she looked up at him and asked, “What do you think we should do next?”

He smiled at her. “Stick to our original plan, of course. The various sects will be sending their representatives to Xin Li Garden tomorrow, and the competition’s participants will be there as well. You just need to sit there quietly and fulfill your duties as a princess. We don’t have to worry about them vanishing into thin air if we get them to stay in Xi Ling.”

Shangguan Wan was very quickly convinced by Jiang Yucheng. "Alright, we'll do as you say. I'm curious about their appearances anyway, especially that Chu Liuyue person."

Jiang Yucheng's eyes gleamed darkly as he nodded in agreement.

...

Mu Residence.

Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou followed Duan Ziyu to the front hall, where Mu Qinghe was currently enjoying a rare moment of peace with his eyes shut. He opened his eyes when he heard noises in the hall.

Both Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou paid their respects to him.

Mu Qinghe's gaze lingered on the duo for a while before he opened his mouth to say, "Congratulations for getting such fantastic results in the competition."

Chu Liuyue gave him a humble reply before mentioning her intention to move out of the Mu Residence.

He looked at her fixedly. "Why? Are you not treated well here?"

While Duan Ziyu broke out into a cold sweat, Chu Liuyue shook her head and explained, "Everyone here has treated Little Zhou and me very well. I'm grateful to have received so much help from you, but since

I've come to Xi Ling, I can't stay here forever. I'm really sorry for imposing on you for this long, so I think it's better that we move out and find another place to live in."

### **Chapter 539: Thousand View Garden**

Chu Liuyue's tone was sincere, and she appeared to be serious and determined.

One look at her, and Mu Qinghe knew that she was serious about moving out. As he drummed his fingers against the table, he said, "You have no friends and relatives in Xi Ling, nor do you know many people here. Isn't it more convenient to stay here? With the Mu Residence backing you, you'll be spared a lot of trouble."

Chu Liuyue hurriedly explained, "Lieutenant Mu, being outsiders, we'd just be imposing on you if we carry on staying here—"

"Even though my residence can't be compared to those of prestigious families, I'm more than capable of supporting the two of you." At that, Mu Qinghe shot her a meaningful look.

*Ah, he hasn't forgotten about the 90,000 white crystals I spent previously...* Chu Liuyue let out an awkward cough. "...I appreciate your goodwill, Lieutenant Mu, but... I owe you a lot already. I really don't wish to disturb you any further..."

Despite her tactful approach, everyone present could tell that her mind was set.

While Mu Qinghe fell into deep thought with his eyelids lowered, Chu Liuyue remained silent as she waited for his reply.

The pin-drop silence in the hall was deafening.

After a while, Mu Qinghe rose to his feet. "Since you've made up your mind, I won't stop you from doing so. But do know that you'll no longer enjoy the benefits you had while staying here the moment you leave."

He walked a couple of steps before stopping and adding, "I'll give you 10,000 white crystals for emergency purposes."

His willingness to help her despite her insistence on leaving surprised Chu Liuyue a lot. She hurriedly said, "Thank you for your goodwill, Lieutenant Mu, but I can't accept this money."

*Mu Qinghe eyed her suspiciously. Given how fast she spent my money previously, 10,000 white crystals wouldn't even be enough to last her for a few days. Yet, she's refusing them? Is she planning to starve herself?*

Chu Liuyue could naturally tell what was on his mind, and her eyes curved as she said, "Don't worry. Young Master Jian promised to give me a portion of his winnings from betting on me. That money should be able to last me for quite some time."

A frigid look flashed across Mu Qinghe's face before he left wordlessly.

*A slight frown settled on Chu Liuyue's forehead as she watched Mu Qinghe leave. For some reason, I have this feeling that he's somewhat upset.*

However, this thought disappeared in no time because she reckoned that a busy man like him wouldn't have the time to care about trivial matters like where she was going to stay.

She then looked at Duan Ziyu. "It's getting late now, so Little Zhou and I will have to impose on you for just one more night before we leave tomorrow."

*What else can I say to that? It's clear that Lieutenant Mu wants her to stay; otherwise, he wouldn't have said all those things. I don't know if she really couldn't understand what he was saying or if she was just acting dumb when she refused him so flatly.*

"Be my guest." Duan Ziyu took his leave after that.

Thus, Chu Liuyue returned to the small courtyard with Qiang Wanzhou.

"It's been tough on you for the past few days of the competition. Go get some rest tonight. We still have to go to Xin Li Garden tomorrow." She then headed toward her room.

But just as she was about to step inside, Qiang Wanzhou suddenly said, "He must've offended you before."

She looked back and shot him a curious glance. "Pardon?"

He stared squarely at her. "Otherwise, there's no reason why he'd look so guilty when facing you."

Her expression froze for a moment before she curled her lips. The smile, however, didn't reach her eyes as a cold, complicated look flashed across them. "You got it wrong. It wasn't directed at me, nor was it guilt."

After saying that, she turned around and entered her room, leaving Qiang Wanzhou standing there in confusion for a long while.

*I've always been astute to people's emotions, so why did she say that? Did I... really get it wrong?* Qiang Wanzhou couldn't come up with an answer even after pondering for some time, so he decided to put it aside and go back to his room instead.

...

The night silently passed on just like that.

Early the next morning, Chu Liuyue went to bid Mu Qinghe goodbye after waking up and packing her belongings but was told by Duan Ziyu that the lieutenant had already left the house. Thus, she simply left with Qiang Wanzhou without saying farewell.

Although the Wan Zheng Competition had ended, there was still a buzz going on in the city. Many people recognized the duo as they walked on the streets.

It was inevitable because the two of them had very unique presences and appearances, making them stand out in the crowd.

Nevertheless, nobody dared to approach them, and everyone very wisely stayed clear of their path.

As they got closer to Xin Li Garden, there were fewer and fewer people around them.

Chu Liuyue noticed that there were Black Guards stationed around when she reached the end of a street and led Qiang Wanzhou forward.

The security was clearly much tighter than before, which showed that the people who were coming today were all of extraordinary statuses.

Guarding the entrance of Xin Li Garden were two elders from the royal family, which further affirmed her guess.

Chu Liuyue calmly went up to them.

Even though the two elders recognized the two youngsters, they only let them pass after conducting a stringent check.

A pageboy then approached them. "Please follow me."

Chu Liuyue and Qiang Wanzhou nodded and followed him. She asked, "May I know where we're heading to now?"

The pageboy replied, "Thousand View Garden."

Surprised, her footsteps halted for a moment, which earned her a curious look from Qiang Wanzhou.

She quickly returned to her usual state. *I can't believe we're being taken there...*

"The purplish-gold Buddha leaf is located in that direction!" the legendary three-eyed eagle suddenly said to her.

#### **Chapter 540: Bullied**

"Thousand View Garden? Are you sure?" asked Chu Liuyue in her mind.

"Absolutely," answered the legendary three-eyed eagle firmly. "I'll be able to discern its precise location once we get closer."

Her brows were slightly knitted together as she calmly moved forward. *I was very familiar with Thousand View Garden, but I've never noticed anything strange in all those years. Since when did a purplish-gold Buddha leaf appear there?*

...

Under the pageboy's lead, they walked past a winding corridor and a lake before finally arriving at Thousand View Garden. Through a simple but elegant arch, Chu Liuyue noticed that many people were already in the courtyard.

"Please go ahead—" The pageboy stopped outside the arch, which was heavily guarded inside. He was only responsible for bringing the guests in and thus had no right to enter with them.

“Thank you.” Emotions slightly rippled in her heart as she took in the familiar scene in front of her. She couldn’t be any more familiar with each of the bricks, stones, grasses, and trees here. As she gently exhaled, she straightened her back and walked through the arch with a smile.

The noisy courtyard instantly fell silent, and everyone looked over with varying expressions.

She swept a quick glance at her surroundings, recognizing many familiar faces right away. Yang Qin’er and the others—who were severely injured—were all here as well.

As this gathering concerned the sect they would soon be entering, nobody dared to tarry.

When she failed to see the various sects’ representatives, she surmised that they had to be inside the hall. *This place here is clearly reserved for the young participants who have participated in the Wan Zheng Competition.*

The atmosphere became slightly strange as many felt indignant, having lost to the participant with the lowest cultivation level. However, they had all been to the Tianling God Realm and had experienced what it was like inside. They knew full well that the 14-year-old Chu Liuyue didn’t win with just sheer luck, and this was what made them feel even more terrible.

Those who could participate in the competition were all geniuses with Dijing Yuan meridians and would absolutely be the crème de la crème anywhere they went. However, the competition’s results had indubitably dealt a huge blow to their confidence. Mixed feelings arose within them as they looked at Chu Liuyue.

Chu Liuyue didn’t take this matter to heart, so she was oblivious to it all. After randomly finding herself a seat, she surveyed the scenery around her with just the right amount of curiosity and restrained politeness so that others wouldn’t be able to pick faults with her.

“So you’re not going to get up, huh?” A shrill female voice floated over out of nowhere.

The entire courtyard instantly went quiet.

Following the crowd’s line of sight, Chu Liuyue saw two girls arguing with each other.

The one who spoke earlier was wearing a fancy purple dress and appeared to be in her early twenties; she had a look of arrogance on her face.

On the other hand, opposite her was a young girl in her mid-teens who had some baby fat on her. She was a Chong Xu Cabinet disciple, as evidenced by the silver cauldron emblem embroidered on the left chest of her green shirt dress. From her flushed face and her clenched fists, one could tell that she was desperately trying to hold back her anger. “This seat is mine in the first place, Miss.”

The lady in purple sneered, “Yours? Does it have your name?”

“This seat was indeed prepared for Chong Xu Cabinet. If you don’t believe me, we can always verify it with someone,” said the chubby teenager.

“What? Who did you say it was prepared for?” The lady in purple cupped her hands around her ear. “Chong Xu Cabinet? That sect is still around? I thought it was disbanded a long time ago!”

The teenager glared furiously at the other woman. “Please watch your words, Miss!”

The latter shot her a side-glance. “Who do you think you are to tell me what to do?”

The woman's arrogance made her shake with anger, but it was clear that the chubby teenager wasn't good at arguments when she couldn't come up with a single retort. "Don't you insult my sect; otherwise, don't blame me for being nasty!"

The purple-clothed woman put her hands to her chest and sarcastically cried, "Oh my, I'm so scared! The dying Chong Xu Cabinet is threatening me!"

Her words drew laughter from the crowd.

The young man who stood next to her came forward and said to the chubby young lady, "I'm sorry, Miss, but my junior has always been willful. Please don't take it to heart if she offended you in any way. It's her first time at Thousand View Garden, so it's only inevitable that she gets curious. Could you give this seat to her?"

Chu Liuyue noticed the nine-star emblem—the stars were connected in a line—on the left of his chest, which revealed that he was a Jiu Xing Alliance member.

The chubby woman took in a deep breath before saying, "These seats are reserved for the four major sects' disciples, so they don't belong to you. Why must you pick on me out of the many people here?"

*Nobody even went up to provoke the other three major sects' representatives, who are just sitting next to me. It's obvious that they are picking on me!*

The young man scoffed. "I believe... everyone knows the reason, isn't that so? It's out of respect that I talked to you politely, but since you insist on behaving like this, then don't blame me for being rude."

The man then pointed to the seat behind her. "Is Chong Xu Cabinet even qualified to sit there? Without even saying, everyone knows that your sect is nothing but an empty shell now. This is Xi Ling, a place where power does the talking! Since you guys no longer have power and influence, you deserve to step down!"

"Senior, we don't have to waste our saliva talking to a shameless loser like her! Let's just show her what we're capable of!" The woman in purple looked absolutely smug as she said this. *Jiu Xing Alliance has long ago surpassed Chong Xu Cabinet, so this seat ought to be ours!*

The chubby lady choked with anger as she felt her blood boiling and begging to fight. Her last strand of rationality kept her glued to the ground though. Before coming, the Second Elder had told her not to cause any trouble as the Wan Zheng Competition was very important. Their sect was currently in a precarious position and was an easy target for others. They could end up in huge trouble should they make any mistake.

This was why she had been restraining herself.

But those people insulted her sect time and again. The woman in purple also hadn't even become an official disciple of Jiu Xing Alliance, yet she was already behaving so arrogantly. They were clearly bullying Chong Xu Cabinet.

The man raised three fingers. "Please give up the seat to my junior by the count of three. Otherwise..."

"Otherwise, what will happen?" A clear female voice suddenly floated over.